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VIETNAM 1.

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CON SON: SAIGON'S DEVIL'S ISLAND

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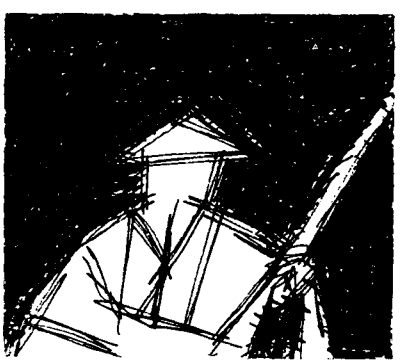
THE DIEMIST RESTORATION

D. Gareth Porter



IN THE WAKE OF JOHN L. LEWIS

THE LAYMEN'S ASSOCIATION MEETS

SHE MARRIED A PRIEST

THE ARTIST AND MARXIST AESTHETICS

NEW YORK'S POLITICAL POLLUTION

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NEWS & VIEWS

Perish the Thought

One spin-off from the Nixon election has provided welcome ammunition for combatting the baleful growth of the Defense Department and its contractor-clients. It is analogous, says Wes Barthelmes, administrative assistant to Congressman Bolling, to finding fun in Philadelphia on a Sunday night—only much more important.

We are being blessed with a torrent of information from highly knowledgeable persons dislodged by the election from policy-making positions. Mercifully relieved of their security halter, these people are giving us unsecured folks a description of the insanity that masquerades as military procurement—a dinosaur squatting in our backyard that our keepers continuously and frantically feed in hope it won't die and stink up the place.

We're being told that during the 1950s alone there were 38 million procurement transactions with a dollar volume of $228 billion! (The Defense budget now totals $80 billion—virtually the same as at the peak of World War II.) But over the years, only a relatively few have been able to piece together scattered fragments of annual "posture statements" and related budget statements of Defense Secretaries to find a "rationale" for the madness. Most of us, (and this includes most members of Congress), have had neither time nor access to informative reading matter that would have exposed this dreadful situation prior to 1969.

The budget we complain about rests upon a number of factors, beginning with foreign policy and consequential commitments—remember those treaties (SEATO and CENTO and "WHAMMO") that John Foster Dulles scattered about the globe.

But the zaniest of factors is that labeled "military contingencies." This harmless sounding phrase hides the decision, acquiesced in by at least four Presidents (of both parties), that our military forces must be of sufficient size to wage *at the same time* "two and one-half" wars —for example, two major wars would be a land invasion of Southeast Asia by (Red) China *and* a Soviet invasion of Western Europe; a "half" war would be a minor rebellion by forces "unfriendly" to the U.S. against a "friendly" government in, say, Latin America.

Shortly after Charles Schultze, director of the Budget Bureau under President Johnson, described the incredible definition of military contingency to a group of liberal Democrats, a conscientious and able Member of Congress remarked: "My God, I never knew that in all these years. Why weren't we told about this nonsense?"

Well, why weren't we? The question demands an answer.

Guns on Campus

Steel Labor, newspaper of the United Steelworkers of America, fathoms the stately quiet of Bob Jones University in Greensville, S.C.: "it bans beards, miniskirts, movies, rock music, liberals, unions and blacks."

Also helping keep the peace: armed guards and a secure, high fence. "It's not clear," *Steel Labor* remarked of the last, "if this is to keep people out or in."

BSU president Bob Jones clarified that point in a bristling letter to *SL* editor Russ Gibbons: "it is to keep people like you out," who don't believe "in modesty, decency, morality, religious freedom, and 'old fashioned,' constitutional Americanism."

"Old fashioned, constitutional Americanism". . . . Bob Jones has requested state permission to arm campus guards with machine guns against any possible red invasion. The tommy guns are needed, Bob Jones explained, because there are 2,000 young ladies on campus and BSU has promised their mothers to keep them from all harm.

All that remains is for Bob Jones University to recall alumnus Ian Paisley and place him in charge of the detail.

Living Aggiornamento

Bishop Valencia Cano of Buenaventura, Colombia, in an open letter to "brother priests":

". . . For me the aggiornamento is for the priest to feel as did Christ the sufferings of the disinherited masses and the revolt of youth imprisoned by certain structures which must continually be modified. . . .

"To live the aggiornamento is to discover and appreciate in every person and in every land the riches with which Providence has endowed them, so that men in their infinite diversity reflect the infinite perfections of the Creator; so that, united by charity, they will make their way together as members of the great human family.

"To live the aggiornamento is for the priest to feel himself to be the heir of history, but looking toward the future; it is to take part in the tremendous drama of the world today in accordance with the great light diffused by the Gospels. . . .

"Finally, to live the aggiornamento is for the priest to understand that the saint of our day, on our continent, will be the man able to bring the rich and the poor to sit at the same table."

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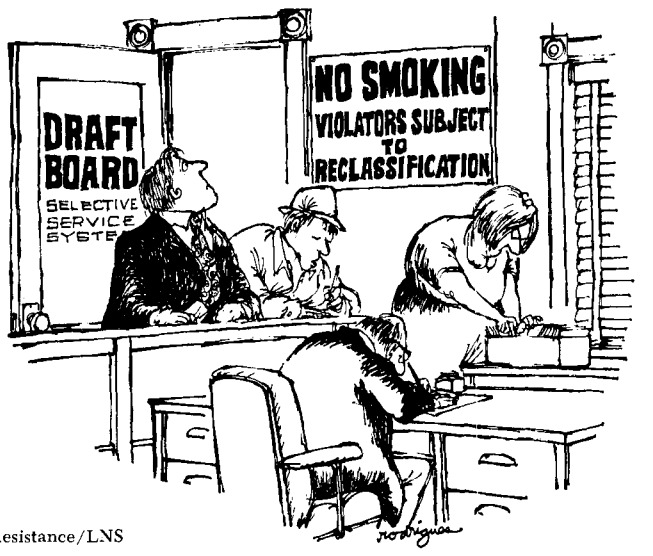

Resistance/LNS

Odds 'n Ends

—Down the drain seems a Senate proposal to limit agriculture subsidies to $20,000 a farm; killed June 23 by subcommittee vote. Which protects the interests of Mississippi Senator James Eastland nicely. Eastland Plantations received $157,930 in subsidies last year, bringing to $451,201 its harvest in grants since 1964.

—Don't worry too much about arms' boondoggles costing the U.S. very much. We just unload the crap abroad. Like the 17 new patrol boats which are a $68 million embarrassment to the Navy. Senator Jackson has let slip that the jinxed ships are being pawned off on Israel.

—And lest you think the righteous aren't always rewarded, A. E. Fitzgerald, the Air Force official who exposed the C-5A fiasco, has been assigned new duties: to review construction of a 20-lane bowling alley in Thailand.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Christians and Jews

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Father Pawlikowski's "Across a Deep Canyon" [May 30] hit the nail right on the head—several nails, as a matter of fact. As Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, I can only say "Amen" to every statement in the article and "thank you" to Father Pawlikowski for having written it and to *Commonweal* for having published it.

I am a little older than Father Pawlikowski, but, if it meets with Ezekiel's approval, I should like to add that I, too, "remain optimistic" and persist (most of the time) in dreaming dreams of a better day to come. My optimism is partly a matter of temperament, I suppose, but it's also grounded in the experience of our Advisory Committee in meeting, at fairly frequent intervals, with representative Jewish groups, rabbinical and lay. As recently as May 19, we spent several hours with one of these groups discussing, with the utmost frankness and yet in an atmosphere of complete cordiality, almost all of the major points raised by Father Pawlikowski in his excellent article. Indeed his article reads almost like a verbatim transcript of our free-for-all discussion.

I think it would be fair to report, incidentally, that the participants in our May 19 meeting, Jews and Catholics alike, almost unanimously agreed that we ought to move ahead without delay in the direction outlined by Father Pawlikowski. This was also unanimously agreed to last month in Europe at an international seminar of Catholic experts in the field of Christian-Jewish relations.

In closing, may I express the hope that Father Pawlikowski can be persuaded to serve as one of the Catholic

(Continued on page 446)

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NEW YORK'S POLITICAL POLLUTION

White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II.
The Kerner Report

I do not believe the great majority of the American people living in our cities are anti-Negro. I do not believe they're anti-poor, or anti-welfare or reactionary or members of hate groups.
President Nixon

Remember the old days when Barry Goldwater rode across the land terrifying folk with crazy talk of bombing North Vietnam and restoring law and order here at home? And you recall how the overweening righteousness of the Right carried only two of our great states? Those were the days, my friend. Indeed, we hoped they would never end. But for reasons of national interest we bought a game of dominoes and began playing Asian Land War. Our heart was in a foreign country; so too our treasure.

Quite predictably, the domestic natives became restless. Ghettos burned, colleges struck, candidates were heckled, demonstrators maced, cops compared with swine. Clearly, this was nature's way of telling us something is amiss in the city. In Los Angeles, Minneapolis and now New York we are given previews of the final urban solution. For it was the law and order code that made winners out of Yorty, Stenvig, Marchi and Procaccino. As Nixon is wont to make clear: "The American people in our cities, in our small towns and in this country are fed up to here with violence and lawlessness. And they want candidates who will take a strong stand against it. And I think that's the message for the candidates in the future." Indeed.

New York has until November to think it over. The primary sweeps by Republican-Conservative John Marchi and Democrat Mario Procaccino are only paper triumphs. Marchi could manage a mere 51 percent of the city's sparse Republican vote (111,725). Procaccino hardly impressed with a 32 percent mini-mandate from fellow Democrats. What really happened in New York is that 594,000 frontlash votes for Lindsay-Wagner-Badillo-

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Mailer-Scheur defeated the 345,000 Marchi-Procaccino backlash. Statistical juggling brings premature consolattion, however, Lindsay and his liberal colleagues were repudiated in part, and two great white hopes were thus unleashed upon the city to do their polarizing thing. This predicament is the unsurprising outcome of a recent period of polluted politics.

MILITANT/LNS

John Lindsay is not innocent. Despite his promise, New York has been less fun to live in during the past four years. "The substantive achievement does not exist," writes the Mayor's former supporter Murray Kempton, "under Lindsay, the air is fouler, the streets dirtier, the bicycle thieves more vigilant, the labor contracts more abandoned in their disregard for the public good, the board of education more dedicated to the manufacture of illiteracy than any of these elements were under Wagner." Squeezed during the prolonged school strike between blacks and Jews, the two uneasy factions of his liberal coalition, Lindsay lost favor on both sides through indecision. Here was a mayor able to calm a potential riot with a single bound through the ghetto—now unsafe in the synagogues! The February snows visited another avalanche of ill will. Crime and welfare rose, patience and confidence sank. The primary would not be kind.

Slowed by the Republican albatross, Mayor Lindsay never removed his gloves in the June preliminaries. He had to play it safe since he was speaking to a closed party circle—un-poor, un-black and half unsympathetic. Although the Republicans denied their nomination, Lindsay had the insurance of running unopposed on the Liberal party ticket. He is on the November ballot, then, in any case. Whether disenchanted Democrats will join him in a New Urban party is still undecided. But if he keeps saying the good, right and just things he said at a post-primary anti-ABM rally, his voice should drown out the echoes of Marchi and Procaccino. "The taxpayers of New York city," spoke the newly liberated Mayor, "send $3 billion in tax money every year to fight an indefensible war in Vietnam. They send $6 billion more to finance the continued growth of the military-defense empire. That is $9 billion of New York money that goes every year into the work of death. That kind of priority is insane, and it is time we had the courage to say so." Meanwhile, back in the city, Lindsay offers a sort of last best hope. The Mayor may not be the ultimate in urban affairs, but he is certainly the only choice we can contemplate at the moment.

Apart from the law and order brouhaha, there were other signs that the art of politics has declined in New York. Democratic *déjà vu* Robert Wagner almost turned back time in a second-place finish. Pushing himself as a conciliator, he chaffed his own image with "Stop the war in New York" subway advertisements and "I found the snowplows, Mr. Mayor" television shots. Such is not the high road. And when Wagner was asked to choose between Lindsay and Procaccino (the gentleman he accused a few days previous of trying "to ride a backlash into City Hall"), the most he could summon was: "That's an awful toss-up."

Wagner's unsuccessful running mate for City Council President, Congressman Hugh Carey, now a would-be independent candidate for the mayoralty, was equally undistinguished on the stump. Why would a man with so many good instincts play on his prolific progeny and fabricate an unauthorized Ted Kennedy endorsement tape left over from a previous campaign? The same bafflement occurs when one considers the precariousness of Carey's latter-day bid for mayor. Another liberal candidate in the race will only make disaster that much more possible.

Governor Rockefeller has also added to the city's electoral toxic. By gratuitously announcing he would back the winner of the Republican primary, Rockefeller locked himself into an unedifying alliance with Conservative Marchi. Granting that Lindsay deserved renomination, he surrendered to party exigence instead of maintaining a characteristic liberal independence. It is said the Governor is planning another term. He will need unified party support. So the explanation goes. But in doing Mr. Lindsay in for the sake of an unknown ally of the Right, Rockefeller betrays a long tradition and his natural heir.

The political air is heavy over New York City and the clouds are spreading nationwide.

KAHN'S CANAL

Herman Kahn has made the absurd his profession. Some years ago he taught us to think the unthinkable, that is, to stop worrying and love speculating about tolerable levels of Armageddon. Despite the resurrection of this weird calculus with the arrival of the ABM debate, the megadeath business is passé. The action has switched, along with the think tanks, to limited war strategy. Thus Kahn's earlier *Kampf—How We Can Win in Vietnam* and now his updated version of making the war "acceptable."

As reported in the *New York Times* of June 27. the Hudson Institute, headed by Kahn, has proposed yet another scheme for nothing less than victory in Vietnam. It is full of that macabre Green Beret *machismo* that inspires the foolish and kills the brave.

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Here's how it works—on paper: over the next two years the U.S. cuts its forces to between 100,000 and 200,000; half would be held in reserve on the coast to reinforce those Asian boys who should have been fighting their own wars from the beginning; the other half would provide tactical frontline support for the same Asian boys. We also convince the Montagnards to stop kidding around in the jungle, step up their irregular involvement and start harassing the Vietcong in desolate areas (probably around Hamburger Hill and Benhet). Large sweeps would be discouraged and the small patrol action with room-service artillery increased.

That old Charlton Heston *Khartoum* ploy would also be put to use in the digging of two fortified canals, one running along the Cambodian border from the Gulf of Siam to the Saigon area where it would connect with a second ditch encircling the capital city.

The whole idea sounds rather smashing. But won't that canal run beside McNamara's Wall, through strategic hamlets and smack into the light at the end of the tunnel?

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LAYMEN'S ASSOCIATION

COMING INTO MATURITY

Last year at this time the National Association of Laymen met in Chicago in the electric excitement of the Charles Davis-John McKenzie debate. This year in Cleveland the meeting was calmer, somewhat smaller (about 600 delegates), only occasionally exciting, more often so moderate as to seem sedate.

Last year the debate on resolutions ended in none being passed and never got past the fiery oratory about lay power in the preamble. This year resolutions went through without a voice raised against them—with one exception: the controversial Black reparations matter on which there was heavy debate and which finally was passed. Full rights and responsibilities for women in the Church, including the priesthood, the gradual phasing out of grade and secondary parochial schools and the maintenance in their place of schools for special education, continued emphasis upon diocesan financial disclosure, and peace: no problem on consensus for all of these. The convention further urged all laymen, priests, and bishops "to examine the case of Bishop Shannon in the light of the dominant theme of Vatican II—collegiality." It acted positively on such matters as democratic process in the selection of bishops, selective conscientious objection, the blockade-breaking effort of Joint Church Aid USA, and more public housing for the inner cities of the nation.

If no moments of high excitement were achieved, there was solid evidence that delegates had turned their faces away from the computing of hierarchal and clerical wrongs. The only house grievance to disturb them was the issue of Bishop Shannon. Petitions in his support were widely circulated; every lapel and dressfront had SUPPORT SHANNON buttons on them.

In the workshops involvement in community concerns and commitment to social action rather than fruitless criticism of the religious structure was their major interest. Racism, participatory politics, peace, ghetto life, black and white poverty were on the delegates' minds. The most lively workshop, Welfare in Crisis, was conducted by an eloquent team of blacks from the North and Greater Cleveland Welfare Rights Organization. Their persuasiveness convinced their listeners to propose to the general assembly that evening, after Mayor Stokes' address, that a general collection be taken up for their work. Five hundred dollars was raised; it might have been more if the fourth collection basket sent out among the 800 in the Grand Ballroom had ever come back to the collectors.

Mayor Stokes was impressive and witty. He opened by noting that he had come, not for reparations, but to replace Julian Bond, originally scheduled to appear but held up on legislative business in Alabama. Using Teilhard as text—"Faith unexercised mocks God"—he described his experiences as Mayor, dovetailing his main concerns for the peace, housing, and welfare of Cleveland into the generally dominant temper of the convention. His mood was dispassionate and pessimistic. He admitted, of his progress with his city, that: "I won't suggest I'm disheartened, but things look black," and then laughed with us at his pun. Questions to him were poignant. Why does the black man hate me? Do they want me to work for them? What can I, a white suburbanite, do to help the plight of the cities? His answers were equally direct, urging blacks to reject hate and separatism, urging whites to care and accept the difficulties and work with them toward "building the earth."

Another highpoint of the three-day session was an address by Bishop Remi De Roo of Victoria, B.C. In

Summer Schedule

In keeping with the usual practice, *Commonweal* is again appearing on alternate weeks during July-September. Forthcoming issues will be dated July 25, August 8, August 22, September 5, and September 19. From then on, we will resume our normal weekly publishing schedule.

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a moment which surely must approach the zenith for humility on the part of a bishop in this year, De Roo asked NAL secretary Laura Caldwell if she would mind reading over his speech beforehand to be sure he was saying something in the spirit of the convention. He was. He reported on a questionnaire circulated by his office to his diocese's 50,000 Catholics. Answers to it told him much, he said, about the current state of mind of his people, about the loss of youth to the Church, about the existence of racism in the churches, of the feeling of the people that they are second-class citizens in their Church and the resultant apathy this creates. He said the problems of social justice they see are moral problems, but he emphasized that the role of the laity is not merely temporal and practical but spiritual as well, a role hitherto reserved for clergy and religious: "Vatican II teaches that the baptismal priesthood of every Christian means that the laity as well as the clergy are responsible for both spiritual and temporal dimensions of life."

People, he found, were disturbed about authority. To the bishop, "The only source of our membership in the Church is faith and baptism into the body of Christ. In Christ we are made sons of our heavenly father. From this flows a vertical relationship of filiation or sonship, and a horizontal relationship of fraternity or Christian brotherhood which is more profound than, and prior to, any other relationship in the Church."

And he concluded: "The Church will regain its credibility when its mission to proclaim the living gospel takes priority over all vested interests."

But, as I said, the overall effect of the convention this year was not startling. The organization is coming into its maturity, having the expected growing pains of tight finances, and has hired a fulltime executive, Don Nicodemus, to handle its affairs and raise some money for it. It now has 25 affiliates; at least ten more are in the process of forming. Its head seems set toward greater involvement in concerns of a troubled world—Nicodemus mentioned peace, racism, and poverty as his own major interests—but in internal Church matters it remains moderate and somewhat orthodox. The Mass on Sunday was unexperimental—with pictures, but conventional. Workshops on parish councils and experimental communities had if anything moved backwards since last year in their settling-in complacency and lack of significant creative suggestions.

Most people I talked to agreed that lay organizations were progressing best in areas where they were involved in social action programs, seemed to think that people learn the ropes of change in civic, social and political action and then apply their learning and techniques to lay action in the Church.

Also present, under the hospitable wing of the convention, and showing that no movement, no matter how avant-garde, is without its farther-outers: the Catholic Radicals of the Diocese of Cleveland whose room of hospitality contained a large ashtray for draft card burning; a chap handing out literature on Communists and Christianity, and attractive youngsters selling the *Catholic Radical,* a good broadside for peace out of Milwaukee.

To keep the record straight. Last year the NAL convention shared the facilities of the Palmer House with the American Accordionists Association. This year it found itself engulfed by living replicas in mock sailor suits. Set down in its midst on the last day was the Ohio Association of the Mothers of Twins.

DORIS GRUMBACH

(Doris Grumbach, author and essayist, teaches literature at the College of St. Rose in Albany.)

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STRUGGLE IN THE UMW

IN THE WAKE OF JOHN L. LEWIS

By the time they had buried John Llewellyn Lewis, the 110,000 American members of his United Mine Workers had a week's holiday away from the dark shafts. The father figure, the legendary hero to three generations of mine workers and the thunderer who roared the sounds of protest of another era of social change, was dead.

It was just as well, many in the coal towns were saying. Had he lived, Tony Boyle—whom "the old man" had advanced as his heir apparent ten years ago—would have in some way obtained a public manifestation of the Lewis oratory, and with it the special wrath reserved for those who presumed against the perpetuation of incumbency.

Even Ralph Nader, who has mushroomed from his consumer and safety crusade to launch labor union reforms with the Mine Workers as a target union, had sought to invoke the name of the revered John L. Lewis on the side of the revolt spreading in the coal fields. And if it were inevitable that the Lewis legend would continue after his death, so also it seemed would be those who would lament the decline of his union without associating the unquestioned power which he wielded for half a century.

Labor historians have already assessed the role of Lewis and have found that by far the most accurate measuring stick of greatness has been the political, social and personal contempt evoked among his contem-

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poraries. As the old man observed when Lyndon Johnson presented him with a Congressional Medal of Freedom a few years ago, "They fought me on everything I did and now they give me a medal." So too they had designated as a "national historical landmark" the birthplace of Eugene Victor Debs, whom they had also sent to prison. (Other labor leaders more to the liking of their contemporaries had warships named after them, like the destroyer U.S.S. Samuel Gompers. George Meany, say the wags, is good for at least a heavy cruiser.)

Beyond the drama and the rhetoric, the superb oratory and leadership which resulted in the organization of millions in the New Deal era, was the undisputed autocracy of John L. Lewis. For him there was never a question of any real internal democracy, and a willing constituency of mine workers instinctively suspect of outside influences in their union gave Lewis a mandate to solidify his leadership.

The nominal autonomy which existed in the UMW's district infrastructure was once reduced to the point of having fully two-thirds of the union's districts run by Lewis appointees. "The board became his *alter ego*," Sidney Lens wrote, "an assembly of his hirelings who owed their jobs and their livelihoods to their leader and who would as soon depart from his directions as a vassal from the directions of his feudal lord." When a tough-talking W. A. (Tony) Boyle assumed the Lewis mantle in 1963, few knowledgeable observers disagreed that the best—if not the only—thing he had going for him was the approval of the old man.

Tony Boyle knew better than anyone that when he lived, Lewis served to break rank and file resentment against the leadership of his successor. Now there will be no such restrictions as a reverence for the old man. The flood gates are open, and Boyle's enemies will find easier the difficult role of opposition politicians in a union constructed not to foster but to thwart an interior dialogue.

The attacks will come as a hundred arrows against the Boyle administration, accusing it not only of excessive wealth, but of waste, incompetence, sinecurism, misuse of funds and crude violence to the union's own constitution. Boyle, like many union leaders viewing unrest among their membership, will continue to suggest sinister outside influences, citing interloper Nader in the same breath as that of the Communist party's family newspaper, the *Daily World*.

On just one vital internal issue of concern to every working coal miner—the black lung controversy—Boyle stands condemned. In the dramatic victory of the wildcatting West Virginia UMW members last winter—in which 40,000 miners closed down the coal industry in a Populist-like revolt, the union hierarchy emerged scarred and pathetic. Boyle was reduced to calling Nader and a sympathetic West Virginia congressman "finks" and "union busters" despite the achievement of new legislation and calls in Congress for meaningful mine safety laws and lung compensation.

Joseph (Jock) Yablonski, a 59-year-old union functionary from Western Pennsylvania, stands the best chance of unseating Boyle. Like so many other union "rebels," however, his credentials are largely those of an undeviating loyalist, and he acknowledges his "hypocritical" support of the Boyle administration before announcing his own candidacy last May 29. He is known as an able and fair fireman for the union in the seemingly endless routine of coal mine safety walkouts and wildcats, and gained a previous audience when he sought a union vice presidency—against Boyle's wishes. Yablonski has reportedly been fired from his job as acting director of the UMW political action unit, the Labor Non-Partisan League, to which Boyle had assigned him earlier in the year.

Yablonski is making much of things which he himself sat privy to on the UMW executive board for 27 years: since 1959 the union has paid more than $1-million in salaries and expenses to four close relatives of Boyle and UMW Secretary-Treasurer John Owens; that the union has created a private endowment for the top three officers which will allow each to retire on their full $40,000 to $50,000 salaries; that Boyle's brother, Richard, is board member, president and secretary-treasurer (common to the UMW make-up)of UMW District 27 at $25,000 a year, although fewer than 500 union members work in the district.

The UMW's strange relationship with the coal industry, and with industrialist Cyrus Eaton in particular, have been the subject of extensive in-depth research, but few copies of *Harper's* or of Nader's extensive memorandums have reached the coal fields. The stories will begin to gather more currency now with the anti-Boyle campaign, in the wake of both the West Virginia black lung revolt and the death of Lewis. What practical change it can effect in a union whose very tradition is foreign to democracy—at a time when its jurisdiction is phasing out—may be problematic.

The only thing certain is the long route the Mine Workers have taken from the militancy that was the Mollie Maguires. Last winter the UMW's 78-year-old secretary-treasurer addressed a rally of union payrollers, retirees and Boyle faithful in a downtown Pittsburgh park. Denouncing the anti-Boyle movement, he told the assembled miners (among whom the retirees claim only $1,380 a year from the UMW in pensions) that "when I became secretary-treasurer in 1948 we were poor. Now we are a 100-million-dollar institution." It was appropriate, although Tony Boyle might not see the connections, that he was addressing them in Mellon Square.

JOSEPH HILL

(Joseph Hill is a pseudonym for a journalist specializing in labor affairs.)

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DEVIL'S ISLAND OFF VIETNAM

The price of political dissent

TOM FOX

Saigon

The French called it "Poule Condore"; the Vietnamese have shortened it to Con Son. Its green rolling mountains jut from the deep blue waters of the South China Sea about 80 miles southeast of mainland Vietnam. Most respected political leaders, it is claimed, have been sentenced to the island at one time or another by the government of the moment. The latest addition to the list of celebrities is Truong Dinh Dzu, runner-up peace candidate in the 1967 presidential elections. Dzu returned from Con Son to the mainland only last week, just two days before my visit to the island, as a threatening heart condition moved Saigon officials to bring him back to medical facilities.

Thousands of lesser known Vietnamese, however, have not been so fortunate. "For them," as one Saigon student explained, "Con Son is the last step to nowhere." The stories of torture and brutality which drift back are common yet horrifying to the virgin ear. One University student from Hué who spent fourteen months on Con Son for participating in the 1966 "struggle movement" told me of beatings. "There are special zones for torture; I was chained to a cement slab by all fours, then beaten. I couldn't utter a sound and they threw excrement and urine on me from above making the smell unbearable."

Another student described his appointment with torture: "All our clothes are removed, and some are beaten until they lose consciousness. They put us in 'tiger cages' where we could eat only two bowls of rice a day. The cage was without toilet; occasionally guards would beat us with sticks. A mixture of water, blood, excrement and white rice vomited by the prisoners after beating is more disgusting than one can imagine."

I flew to Con Son with two members of a "U.S. Study Team on Political and Religious Freedom," Allan Brick of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Congressman John Conyers of Detroit, probably the first private American group to look into the Con Son prison since the American escalation in 1965. Shortly after landing we spoke with an Army captain who flies "support" missions for the American Coast Guard unit stationed on the island. Americans have also constructed a large radar station to guide B-52 bombing missions over Vietnam.

As we waited for a Vietnamese ARVN officer to take us to the other side of the island—the prison quarters—I toured briefly through the air-conditioned Coast Guard station, complete with fresh milk, breakfast cornflakes, PX, and "Tonite's Movie" which, ironically, that night was "To Hell With Heroes." After a few minutes the jeep arrived and drove us across the winding, mountain road to the prison quarters. Occasionally we passed road-repair crews, prisoners who stood at attention and removed their conical hats before the passing vehicle. I questioned the procedure and later learned island prison regulations allow no prisoner to wear his hat in the presence of Vietnamese officials.

We pulled up to the office and living quarters of Colonel Ngueyn Van Ve, an old French colonial house behind a white stone wall overlooking the main beach areas. Colonel Ve, a small-framed man by Vietnamese standards, is in his fifties. After tracing the prison's history back to 1802, he gave his personal story of the island. "Only two prisoners have escaped since I took control here in 1965," he told us with considerable pride.

TOM FOX, *a doctoral candidate in Asian Studies at Yale, recently returned to Vietnam for an extended stay. This is the first of a series of exclusive, on-the-spot reports.*

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"Ten have attempted escape but eight were captured or surrendered in the mountains."

"Where can they escape to?" I asked.

"Usually they try to build secret rafts in the mountains when they go to cut wood. They save up rice rations and put them aside for their escape. Then they wait for a night of a new moon at a time of year when the currents move toward the coast. But they rarely succeed. We've got 600 Regional Forces soldiers on the island and we can block the shores and hunt them down in the mountains. There's no food there. So they starve or give up. Even those two who did get off the island probably never made it to the mainland."

"How many Vietnamese are on the island?"

"Besides the soldiers there are 200 civil servants and their families. The prison population is 7021." The colonel divided the prisoners into five categories: those who are believed hardcore Viet Cong—2700; those "detained" while investigations into their activities and allegiances continue—2316, Vietnamese soldiers who have committed a "political crime" such as desertion or draft evasion—984; soldiers who have committed a "formal crime"—769; finally, civilians who have committed a "formal crime—252. According to official records 1021 of the 7021 prisoners have committed a "formal crime." If draft evasion or Army desertion is considered a political act, 6,000 of the Con Son prisoners are "political prisoners."

As the Colonel went through his figures, the official head of the Vietnamese prison inspection bureau added that a "political offense" does not designate "engaging in political activities not favored by the government," but rather "by political offense we mean membership in the National Liberation Front or association or cooperation with the Communists." The Colonel nodded to the distinction.

As we toured the prison and spoke with the prisoners it was never quite clear what constituted a "political offense." Many of the detainees as well as convicted prisoners were peasants who had been living in Viet Cong-controlled territory and were picked up as suspects when ARVN or American forces moved in to occupy a new land area. The imprisoning of Viet Cong and Viet Cong "suspects" does not stem from the state of war between North and South. South Vietnamese convicted of "Communist activities" are not necessarily placed in "Prisoner of War" camps. They are rather tried by Military courts —without appeal—for "treason"; the greater majority at Con Son have received life sentences. As Article 4 in the present Constitution reads: *"(1) The Republic of Vietnam opposes Communism in any form. (2) Every activity designed to publicize or carry out Communism is prohibited."*

Approaching a delicate subject I asked, "Is discipline much of a problem?"

"Discipline? Not too much," the Colonel replied. "We have dark cells—solitary confinement cells—for those who do not cooperate."

"No other form of punishment or discipline?" I pressed.

"None," the Colonel replied, arching an eyebrow and shaking his head slowly.

With that we ended our briefing and asked to look around the prison facilities. Colonel Ve told Major Tran to give us a look round the prison, assuring us we could see anything we wanted and talk to whomever we pleased.

We stopped first at the woodshop where some of the prisoners were making canes and small handicrafts out of the hardwood from the mountains. They appeared at least as interested in us as we were in them. One boy in his early twenties, we noticed, was leaning very heavily against one of the tables. His eyes swollen and glassy, he was breathing deeply through a congested throat.

"This man looks sick!" one in our party remarked.

"How do you feel?" the man from the Minister's office asked him in Vietnamese.

"I'm sick with a fever."

"He's not sick!" the workshop warden interjected with a loud voice. "If he were sick he wouldn't be working here today!" the embarrassed warden added. "Tell them if you are sick or not," the warden finally put it to the youth. The boy did not answer.

It was explained to us that a prisoner could have family visits once a month and that letters to and from the prisoners' families were also common. We then began to ask some of the inmates if they had visitors in the past year. Not wishing to force a prisoner to say something which he would later regret, we queried groups rather than individuals, asking them to indicate affirmatively by raising a hand. Few prisoners responded that they had ever seen their families. Many said they had been cut off for up to ten years. A few replied they were too embarrassed to let their families know they were at Con Son. Soon we were told by the prison officials that since "most of the prisoners come from poor families they cannot afford to come visit them on the island." This seemed a plausible answer until we learned later in the day that the Vietnamese Navy provides free transportation to visiting relatives on a monthly basis. Yet almost no one came.

The food at Con Son seemed meager but sufficient by Vietnamese standards. The diet was standard and unvaried. Each prisoner was given one bowl of rice and a small handful of dried minnows two or three times per day. "We feed them dried fish because it keeps better," Major Tran insisted. Beyond rice and dried fish we were told—and we watched one meal—the prisoners are allowed soup comprised of assorted greens and vegetables. Pork is allegedly served once a month. Was the food "sufficient?" Those I asked said it was. One man just looked at me and his food and smiled.

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Work is divided up at Con Son on the basis of the "security of the individual." The "best" prisoners are allowed to work in the woodshop, mechanics shop or brick-making shop. There the work is light and the men can take their siestas "outdoors." Most, however, are kept within one of the five prison complexes. Inside the prison walls life is more controlled and the prisoners stay about 70 to 80 in a room about 30 feet by 20 feet in area. During siesta and sleeping hours there is just enough room to allow all prisoners to rest on straw mats they place on the cement floor. During the day the chambers are hot and quite stuffy. Most of the prisoners strip to their black shorts or roll up their pant legs. Windows are absent. All the men were perspiring as they sat in silence looking at us through the barred door.

The ceiling was about twenty feet in height and high on the walls are solgans painted in bright red letters: "Annihilate Ho Chi Minh," "Order, Hygiene and Silence," "Long live the Republic of Viet Nam."

As we walked through the grounds we talked with prisoners at random. Each time they appeared reluctant to speak, but when our questions drifted toward the process which landed them on Con Son, more became eager to tell us their stories.

Fifty-three-year-old Nguyen Hieu Toi was sentenced by a "mobile-military Court" to seven years on the charge of "having made contacts with the Communists during the Tet offensive." He was picked up and "detained" until two months ago when he was tried and found guilty. He had no witnesses, no defense, no lawyer and no appeal.

Huyhh Van Sieb, 41, has now served 11 years and 5 months of a 12-year sentence. He was picked up in 1958 by the Diem Army while plowing his rice field. He claims he committed no crime, but was found guilty by a "Military Court" for having contacts with the Communists. He told us he is innocent and had no contacts with anyone outside his village. "It no longer matters. Though I am innocent I hope to be free in seven more months."

In one cellblock seventy-one men sat looking at us. We discovered all were political prisoners, that all but five were serving life sentences, and that all had been tried in special "military courts," two words we heard over and over again. None in the room had a private lawyer at his trial; eight had lawyers assigned to them by the government. The men ranged in age from twenty-two to sixty-seven. The greater majority had already served more than five years; some had served up to fifteen. As we questioned the prisoners it became clear that "treason" was the worst of all crimes. Communist activities in the South constitute "treasonous acts."

The "Military Courts" which seemed to have tried most of the prisoners originated in a decree issued by Ngo Dinh Diem on June 16, 1954:

Article 1: From the date of the publication of this article, the authorities have the right to prosecute according to Article 20 of the Armed Forces Code. Whenever deemed necessary, the accused can be sent directly to the Military Court, without having to make preliminary investigation of persons caught fragrante delicto *on a crime or misdemeanor mentioned in the military code, even if the law transgression could lead to the death penalty.*

Article 2: Special Military Courts try law-breaking persons mentioned above without any time limit from the day of issuance of the warrant to summon the defendant before the Special Military Court to the day the court holds its session to examine the case.

The chief justice of the Military-field Court is appointed by the head of the executive branch of the Government, in the present instance, the President of the Republic of Vietnam, President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Those Vietnamese who oppose the Military Courts claim it is "unconstitutional" under the present Republic. They claim that the appointment of the Military Court by the President is a violation of Article 3 of the present Constitution which separates the powers of government. Article 3 reads: "The function and powers of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government must be clearly delineated."

The same opponents to the Military Courts cite Article 6, VI which reads: "A defendant has the right to a defense lawyer for counsel in every phase of the interrogation, including the preliminary investigation."

These opponents claim that most suspects are picked up, with no notification to families and are detained for periods up to one or two years or more—without lawyer and without trial. One Vietnamese arrested twice in the past three years confessed: "Once you have your trial and are sentenced, you are half-way to freedom; the period of investigation is cruelest of all; you don't know when you'll be tortured for evidence. The primary tortures are electric shock treatments on the genitals, hanging from the ceilings, and beatings."

Tiger Cages

Before we finished the tour of Con Son we asked to see the maximum security areas. We told the Major we had heard of the "tiger cages" and disciplinary quarters from various prisoners who had been at Con Son. He denied their existence and told us the only disciplinary measures taken against prisoners were the solitary confinement quarters. He proceeded to show us ten cells, each about four feet by five feet in area in which stone slabs were elevated about four feet above the floor. Ankle shackles at one end of the slab keep the prisoner tied "during the night hours."

In the first cell a young prisoner stood at attention as we opened the door. Ho Duc Thanh had been accused and found guilty of the murder of Congressman Tran Van Van. He had been in the "dark cell" every day since he came to the island seven months ago because he re-

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fused to salute the National flag and continues to refuse. "Did you kill Tran Van Van?" he was asked. "With a gun!" he snapped back.

In an adjacent cell was another prisoner who refused to take part in morning flag ceremonies. "Why was he originally brought to Con Son?" I asked.

"He refused to go into the Army."

"Ask him why he refused," I requested of the Major.

"I am Vietnamese," the man replied, "and I will fight only for the Vietnamese. The Army of this Government fights for the United States." The door once again closed on Nguyen Xuan An. But while I looked at him his eyes squinted. As I later learned, it was the first time he had seen sunlight in seven months.

The Major who guided us through the prison continued to claim that for all the 7021 inmates on the island the only disciplinary facilities were the ten "dark cells" we had just looked at. He also denied the existence of any "disciplinary quarters" althought on the map in the Colonel's office two square were marked "ky-luat" which means "discipline" in English.

Finally, as we were leaving the prison quarters, and after posing several group questions to about eighty Viet Cong prisoners, we asked them about the "tiger cages."

"Ask anyone who has ever been in or has ever seen the tiger cage to raise his hand." The group fell silent. Not a move. Not even a blink of an eye. The prisoners stared into our eyes in utter silence. We thanked the Major for his cooperation and returned to Colonel Ve for final farewells.

The trip back to Saigon by turbojet took 45 minutes. It was raining when we arrived.

In the shoes of the mandarins

THE DIEMIST RESTORATION

D. GARETH PORTER

Nearly six years after the brutal dictatorship of Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu was overthrown, President Nguyen Van Thieu has begun to lay the groundwork for a new political apparatus patterned after the Diemist system. Having completed the process of eliminating all serious political opposition both within the armed forces and among Buddhists and students, Thieu is now preparing the instrument of political control with which he will try to remain in power far beyond the next election.

Unencumbered by the mandarin mentality of the Ngo family, Thieu's brand of "Diemism" will seek to make itself more modern and efficient than that of the First Republic. But he is nevertheless calling upon the technicians and the defenders as well as the methods of the Diem regime in the process. And Thieu, whose political cunning and aptitude for intrigue long ago earned him the nickname "Cao Gia"—the old fox— and who knew the Diemist system from the inside, is the perfect general to preside over this restoration of "Diemism without Diem."

When he was commandant of the Vietnamese military academy at Dalat in 1958, Thieu converted to Catholicism and immediately found favor with Diem. He was promoted to the command of one of the key divisions which was deployed near Saigon to guard against any attempt by other, less trusted officers to oust the President. As one of those few officers whom Diem and Nhu did trust, Thieu entered the high councils of leadership of Nhu's semi-secret *Can Lao* Party, whose primary purpose was to report on any disloyalty or political activities which were not in the regime's interest. *Can Lao* agents, acting as informers, infiltrated the civilian administration, the military, the universities, and the panoply of political parties and organizations which Diem either fostered or allowed to exist. According to a Vietnamese who worked for Nhu, most of the top military and civilian officials were expected to become members of the *Can Lao*, but Thieu, as one of the eleven leaders on the party's Central Committee, was far more than a member.

As his reward for helping to overthrow his sponsor, Thieu received his general's star and became the Secretary-General of the military junta. Then, as each successive coup eliminated his competitors, Thieu managed to come out on the winning side until he was the only General left from the original thirteen-member junta. When the showdown came between Thieu and Air Vice-Marshall Ky over who would head the military ticket in the Presidential election, Thieu again outmaneuvered his rival to become President.

It took most of 1968 for Thieu to move his own men into the key positions previously occupied by Ky's appointees, but the first major blow at Ky's power was the

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cabinet shuffle of May, 1968, in which Tran Van Huong replaced Ky's handpicked Premier, Nguyen Van Loc. But although Huong got most of the attention, the most important appointment was that of Lt.-Gen. Tran Thien Khiem as Minister of the Interior. Khiem was an old friend of Thieu's, and his roles in the Diem regime and the *Can Lao* party had been even more important than Thieu's.

Like Thieu, Khiem was a Catholic convert under Diem, and the President promoted him over more senior men to the command of the Fifth Military Region in the Mekong Delta. It was Khiem who dashed with his troops to Saigon in November, 1960, to save Diem from an attempted paratroop coup, and as a reward he was put in charge of another key anti-coup division south of the capital and promised a promotion to Major-General.

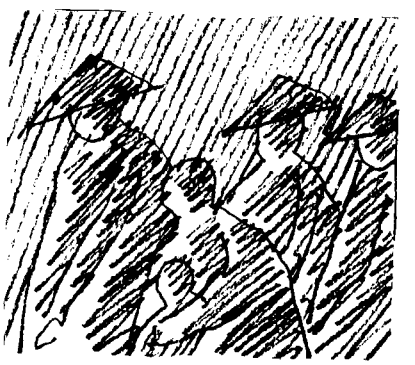
In December, 1962, Khiem received his promotion and was appointed Chief of the Joint Staff in Saigon, the top job in the armed forces. He was considered so close to Diem in 1963 that the generals who plotted to overthrow the President were afraid to include him in their plans. When first approached, he was equivocal, promising to "close his eyes" to the coup for only three hours. Only when the other generals convinced him that Diem and Nhu were negotiating with North Vietnam to end the war did he finally join the coup. The coup plotters, however, never put their full trust in him.

Forced into exile as Ambassador to the U.S. in 1964, Khiem was known to be "nostalgic for the old regime," according to Jean Lacouture. In February, 1965, he was connected with an attempted coup d'état which was planned by right-wing Catholics and *Can Loa* elements under the leadership of Gen. Lam Van Phat. While temporarily in control of Saigon, the coup forces startled listeners to Radio Saigon by broadcasting eulogies of Diem.

Khiem's return thus signaled the first step in Thieu's reconstruction of a Diemist system. Khiem took control of the provincial administration and national police, previously dominated by Ky and put his own brother in charge of the Port of Saigon, a position which Ky had exploited as a major source of funds for political purposes. As Interior Minister, Khiem destroyed the Saigon Student Union as a source of political dissent and ordered Huong's Information Minister, Ton That Thien, to close newspapers which strayed from the government line on war and peace.

During the summer and autumn of 1968, Thieu brought back other figures from the Diem regime. In July, General Do Cao Tri, Diem's I Corps Commander when the Buddhist crisis exploded in Hue in 1963 and a close friend of Khiem, was named Commander of the III Corps area around Saigon. In August, General Phat, Khiem's co-conspirator in the 1965 coup attempt, came out of hiding and was acquitted of the charges on which he had been sentenced to death in absentia in 1965. And in September, Thieu appointed members of the *Can Lao* cadre to fill two of the most sensitive posts in the government: head of the Military Security Serviecs and head of the Civilian Intelligence Organization. The latter appointment was especially interesting, since the primary responsibility of the CIO is to report on all political activities outside the regime.

The most convincing evidence of an incipient Diemist revival, however, involves the re-emergence, in a barely disguised form of the remnants of the old *Can Lao* Party. The ministers, civil servants, politicians and other cadres of the *Can Lao* maintained liaison with each other during the turmoil of the 1964-66 period, waiting quietly for their opportunity to come back into the open. After Thieu became the military candidate for President, he had several meetings with the former Diemists, and a slate of candidates presented itself for the Senate election in 1967, advertising its Diemist orientation. Heading the list was the speaker of Diem's rubber stamp National Assembly, Tran Van Lam, and two former Diemist Ministers (one of whom was also his nephew) were included. Lam's ten-member slate was elected, along with several other former *Can Lao*, to the Senate, which immediately created a special committee to draft



a law pardoning "victims of the November 1 revolution," meaning those who were imprisoned or lost property as a result of Diem's overthrow.

After the election, a Saigon columnist reported that a new *Can Lao* party had appeared openly in Central Vietnam, complete with leaflets and flags, pledging to follow the "right nationalist path of leader Ngo Dinh Diem." In April, 1968, a party surfaced in Saigon, with Thieu's obvious blessing, calling itself the "Social Humanist Revolutionary Party," a name which reminded Vietnamese of Nhu's "Revolutionary Personalist Worker's Party," or *Can Lao*. The Party's chairman, Truong Cong Cuu, had not only served in two of Diem's cabinets but had also headed his "anti-rebel committee" following the abortive paratroop coup of November, 1960. Cuu's committee had imprisoned all 18 signers of a mildly critical manifesto calling on Diem to allow free political expression.

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The former *Can Lao* in Thieu's administration and in the Assembly, along with Thieu's encouragement of a resurrected *Can Lao* Party, caused many Vietnamese to fear that Thieu was trying to recreate the First Republic, with its police state atmosphere and coerced political unanimity. When *Newsweek* reported those fears in an article last October, Thieu's spokesman denied the charge, asserting, "The present government does not remark whether a person is 'new' or 'old' but is only concerned with his ability."

Nevertheless, Thieu's preference has clearly been for Diemist personnel and organization. In March, Thieu shuffled his cabinet again, naming a former Diemist official, Nguyen Van Vang, Minister of Revolutionary Development, while raising General Khiem to the newly created post of Deputy Premier in charge of pacification and reconstruction. Khiem, who continues to hold his Interior Ministry job, was thus given authority over all government ministries, reducing even further the power of the ailing Premier Huong. With control over the police, provincial administration, revolutionary development and the intelligence apparatus, Khiem now occupies a position within the regime roughly similar to that of his old Can Lao chief Ngo Dinh Nhu.

To complete the essentially Diemist structure of political control, Thieu must create a cadre party subject to his discipline and government-manipulated mass organizations. The social Humanist Revolutionary Party, which claims to be organized already in at least 23 provinces, and whose cadres are accustomed to operating as informers under centralized direction, provides Thieu with the basis of his own party. In this context, the loose alliance of political parties, including the Social Humanists, which Thieu put together in May is far less important than the relationship developing between Thieu and the ex-*Can Lao* cadres. If he follows the Diemist pattern, he will use this network as the backbone of the government party, while at the same time infiltrating them into other political organizations, such as Vietnam's largest labor federation, which was almost taken over by the *Can Lao* during the Diem regime.

As for mass organizations, Thieu is already planning to organize a paramilitary "Armed Forces Youth Corps," reminiscent of Nhu's semi-fascist "Republican Youth," which the children of South Vietnamese soldiers would be forced to join. Complete with shoulder patches and, eventually, uniforms, the organization will indoctrinate them to accept "discipline" and "service to the nation," according to a government statement. There are also plans to organize civil servants and teachers, just as Diem did, to insure political loyalty to the Thieu regime.

After years of political turmoil and, more recently, "Constitutional government" under American sponsorship, power has thus been turned back to the discredited men and institutions of the Diem era. The new Diemism may be operated more efficiently and with greater subtlety than the old, but it will be based just as much on coercion and repression. For Thieu's regime still has no *raison d'être* except to preserve its own power.

The Nixon Administration is encouraging Thieu's revival of Diemism out of desperate pragmatism, just as the Americans a decade ago supported the use of the *Can Lao* and the mass organizations by Diem himself. Fascinated by the mechanics of Communist organization but innocent of the social factors which give it substance, Americans have learned very little about Vietnam since Diem.

CORN AND ART

THE STAGE

"An American playwright shouldn't be afraid of being a bit corny," Clifford Odets once said. "Corn is part of American art." This is an immutable truth (at least, the history of American drama has not yet disproved it) about inconstancies; both corn and art have a way of changing before our eyes. The Broadway comedy is a case in point; despite the generic similarities from one decade to another, the best comedies or, at least, the most successful ones display—sometimes obliquely—the tone of their time. At the moment, Broadway provides a laboratory of sorts, a chance to see and compare *The Front Page,* the 1928 farce by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur (*at the Ethel Barrymore*), *and* Woody Allen's *Play It Again, Sam,* which is presumably as new as its 1969 opening date (*at the Broadhurst*). The producers, in both cases, hope that they are purveying entertainment rather than social history and that customers come to laugh; well, whatever turns you on.

The Front Page, as all the reviewers have been saying, is an American classic. It is the play that helped invent the stereotypical American newspaperman, the fast-talking, hard-drinking, poker-playing, scoop-hunting all-American boy so familiar from the memoirs of nostalgic and presumably forgetful newspapermen, from the movies of the 1930's ("tear out the front page") and from the day dreams of contemporary *journalists* who sometimes—very occasionally—regret that romance has been replaced by retirement funds. The world of *The Front Page* may never have existed, as Walter Kerr said in his *Times* review, but it is as real as the Broadway of *The Butter-and-Egg Man* and *Room Service,* the Tin Pan Alley of *June Moon*, and the Hollywood of *Boy Meets Girl,* the racetrack world of *Three Men on a Horse.* The farces of the twenties and thirties created environments, ordinarily eccentric ones, related to real worlds off-stage. The reality of Hecht and MacArthur's courthouse pressroom is not a documentary one, although it provides

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identifiable points of reference to actual reporting—manufactured news, for instance.

The truth is to attitudes and aesthetics. There is a great deal of vitality, masked as indifference, and much irreverence, spun off idealism. The play makes jokes about political corruption, Red-baiting, murder, racism, nepotism, Freudianism, faddism. There is no satiric place to stand in the pell-mell clutter of wisecracks and throw-away lines, but behind it all is a flip longing for the just and the good and a self-mockery which accepts the Augustinian view of humanity and opts for the likable con-man. In aesthetic terms, the environment provides a setting which has a rhythm of its own against which the plot can be acted out and a gallery of characters can be displayed. Although farce plots tend to be intricate and we ordinarily respond to them properly by hoping to see the show succeed or the boy get girl, it is the bits that make the play. We may want to see Hildy Johnson and Walter Burns outsmart the crooked mayor and sheriff and Hildy saved from his whining sweetheart by the conniving Burns, but it is the collection of types—the inept sheriff, the meek messenger from the governor, the newspapermen themselves—about which we really care. One has only to look at the cast of the original production, at names like Allen Jenkins, Joseph Calleia, Eduardo Cianelli, George Barbier, actors whose character turns graced many a later movie, to understand the importance of the comic stereotype to this kind of play.

There are probably three reasons why the current production of *The Front Page* has been greatly praised: the reviewers are glad to have the show back in town; they are surprised to find how well the 40-year-old vehicle works in a season when most new comedies have been disasters; there has been an attempt to re-create the period not to camp it. Although I was far from satisfied with the total production, found it not nearly as funny as the revival of *Room Service* at Philadelphia's Theatre of the Living Arts a few years ago, it is at least a commendable and recommendable revival—particularly compared to the all-star butcheries of recent seasons, *Dinner at Eight* and Mike Nichols' *The Little Foxes*. There are some very good performances in *The Front Page*, from James Flavin, Jesse White, Harold J. Kennedy (who also directed it), Charles White and—I almost wrote, surprisingly—Robert Ryan, as Walter Burns, and some predictable funny personality-turns, from Doro Merande and Arnold Stang. There are two things missing so far as I am concerned: an ensemble sense with the frenetic drive implicit in it; and a Hildy Johnson. Bert Convy is as unconvincingly spirited in that role as he was placid in *Cabaret* and *Fiddler*.

Although the hero of *Play It Again, Sam* is a familiar figure in the American farce (the worm that turns), the play is a decided contrast to *The Front Page*. Allan Felix (happy Allan, get it!), written and played by Woody Allen, is the neurotic nerd Allen has been writing and playing for years. It is a nasty-tongued variation on the demented child that has been Jerry Lewis' stock in trade since the 1940's. The plot—as unimportant and a great deal less interesting than the one in *The Front Page*—tells how the hero, having lost his wife, tries unsuccessfully to get a girl until a one-night stand with the neurotic but beautiful wife of his best friend teaches him to be a man by being himself. The gimmick is that the hero is a movie buff who lives as much in fantasy as reality (did someone mention *The Seven Year Itch*?), staging scenes in his mind, arguing with Bogey (an accurate impression by Jerry Lacy), who wanders in and out giving him advice on how to handle women.

As a writer, Allen is a bush-league S. J. Perelman, a fact that can be seen more clearly in his fake credits in *Playbill*, his few *New Yorker* pieces and his first play, *Don't Drink the Water*. He is more restrained in *Play It Again, Sam*, but here, too, there is the usual Perelmanesque specificity, the burst of trade names, fad references, parody platitudes that identify the author as very contemporary. There is, however, no environment at all. Although the best friend, monomaniacal about where he can be reached, is a one-gag creation and the women are conventional types (the sex-talker, the despairing intellectual), they have neither setting nor substance. *Sam* is a one-character play, a Woody Allen monologue, and as such it is characteristic of current Broadway practice in which stand-up comedians with TV reputations—Alan King, Jackie Mason—are asked to do their usual thing in what passes for a dramatic context. Even comedies that are more than simple substitutes for the Johnny Carson show—*Plaza Suite*, *I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running*—are designed for star performances, not ensembles.

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At the end of *Play It Again, Sam,* the hero fumbles at the belt of a *zaftig* blonde who has come in to use the phone. Yet, this comedy curtain cannot hide the fact that we have been preached an uplift sermon, the message from Bogey's own mouth. By contrast, the end of *The Front Page* is endearingly amoral, a quality one might expect in a comedy today. Despite its success, Woody Allen's play is not quite contemporary. It is a 1950's comedy, disguised with a few up-to-date gossip-column references. Perhaps that is why it is not very funny. Corn, like art, is once again in the process of change. Artistic and financial failures like John Guare's *Cop-Out* and the Horovitz-McNally-Melfi *Morning, Noon and Night* are surely nearer the 1960's tone. If one of the younger playwrights can find a good stand of corn, he may, like the authors of *The Front Page*, stumble onto bona fide Broadway art. GERALD WEALES

WESTWARD HO!

THE SCREEN

The western genre in movies seems to be on the way out—or, judging by the current crop, let's just say it's in decline. Perhaps nobody pays much attention to Horace Greeley anymore (anyway it was John Soule who first said, "Go west, young man"). Or perhaps the American west is getting too built up to stimulate good movie makers. More's the pity—for if there was one form in which Hollywood excelled it was the western. But nowadays films have to have psychology and humor, so perhaps bright young directors find the western too old hat. For a while, the answer to the question: "Where's the western gone?" was "To Italy." Italian directors (and some Germans too) decided when there were too few Hollywood westerns to supply the demand in Europe, they'd show what they could do—and what they could do was make horse operas that had lots of good scenery, violence, and imitations of the western myths turned out by Americans. Foremost among these Italian directors is Sergio Leone whose westerns, starring Clint Eastwood and shot on the plains and mountains of Spain, made a small fortune. So popular and financially successful were Leone's action-packed films like "A Fistful of Dollars" and "For a Few Dollars More," that Paramount Pictures offered to let Leone make a multi-million dollar western with stars galore, Technicolor and wide-screen. Obviously Leone jumped at the chance.

"Once Upon a Time in the West" is more of same from Leone and more and more. It has a fine cast with Henry Fonda as the mean villain, Charles Bronson as director-writer Leone's typical no-name, uncommunicative hero, Claudia Cardinale as the lovely, widowed heroine, Jason Robards as one of those hard-drinking, vague characters who befriends the heroine, and an impressive supporting cast of Americans and Italians, most of whom get killed off at the appropriate time. Much of "Once Upon a Time" is quite interesting, but its 165-minute running time is excessive and the viewer soon tires of the complicated plot (enough for several pictures), of the beautiful Spanish and American west backgrounds, and, most of all, of Leone's arty touches, overdone in his efforts to emulate his American masters, especially John Ford. His opening scenes with Woody Strode catching drops from a railroad station water tank and then finally drinking his catch, or with Jack Elam chasing a fly on his unshaven face and then finally catching the fly with the barrel of his gun are enough to drive most viewers up a wall. The picture has plenty of fisticuffs and violence, but the camp shows through. Perhaps if Leone hadn't had multi-millions, he could have come up with a good 90-minute western.

Multi-millions is the trouble with "Mackenna's Gold" too. If producers Carl Foreman and Dimitri Tiomkin had spent most of their money on a good script, instead of letting Mr. Foreman write one, and less of their money on stars, they might have turned out a western thriller. But then they would have had to drop all the clichés and corn from the absurd plot—clichés and corn that are even *repeated* in this silly movie's 128-minute running time. The plot has to do with several groups of people searching for some gold hidden away in a canyon, gold that the Apaches claim but everybody else is looking for. Among the various searchers and their assistants are Gregory Peck as the stalwart sheriff, Omar Sharif as a bandit who would shoot anyone to get it, Telly Savalas as a villainous army sergeant, and a couple of pretty girls, Camilla Sparv, whose father was just killed by Omar, and Julie Newmar as an Indian yet—in love with Peck—and a long list of citizens from the town of Hadleyburg, Lee J. Cobb, Raymond Massey, Eli Wallach, Burgess Meredith, Edward G. Robinson, and on and on—all interested in that gold in the hills. J. Lee Thompson directed the film, but you have a feeling as you watch that no one is really directing these actors, most of whom seem to be on their own, just doing what they thought the scene was supposed to be about. If ever a film made one decide that the American western is in decline, this is it.

I never was much for the comedy westerns, but "Sam Whiskey" has its moments as Burt Reynolds, Clint Walker and Ossie Davis try to help Angie Dickinson by returning $250,000 in gold to the U.S. mint in Denver from where Angie's husband had stolen it. All this is the reverse of the usual big robbery movies, and at times it is rather amusing. It really has little to do with the western genre; but it does take place in the west, has some pretty scenery in color, and its men are tough. So is Angie Dickinson. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

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SHE MARRIED A PRIEST

The spouse of Father Longo

SALLY CUNNEEN

THE *Midnight Court* is a lusty eighteenth-century poem in which Brian Merriman satirizes the reluctance of Irish males to woo and wed. The complaint of the buxom maid who argues the case for women before the Queen of this visionary court, however, seems quite contemporary.

What is the use of the rule insane
That marriage has closed to the clerical clan
In the Church of our fathers since first it began?

We know it is true there are few but hate
Is it fair to condemn them to mope and moan
Is it fair to force them to lie alone?

In tone and target, Joan Longo's story of her marriage to "Spoiled Priest" Gabe Longo is strangely reminiscent of *The Midnight Court*. Not only does she pinpoint much of the blame for the current dishonesty about priests' "woman trouble" on Irish-American Jansenism; she seems to share the poem's agricultural social outlook. "If we are to have peace, woman must return to the kitchen," she repeats contentedly, from her journey's end on an organic farm, surrounded by children, chickens and pickled green tomatoes. Except for an awareness that our problem is one of *over*-population, Mrs. Longo suggests that all would be well with the world if everyone had warm, honest, personal relationships and a sound diet.

I Married a Priest

JOAN LONGO

Grosset & Dunlap, $5.95; Bantam, 95¢

The cover of her book calls it "frank, moving and sometimes shocking." It is caustically frank, but only in its description of clerics who came to dinner (usually three hours early) to seek Gabe's advice; her Italian anti-sentimentality keeps the details of her own courtship minimal and manages to make a bore even of trial marriage. Indeed, the only shocking thing in the book is its totally negative attitude to religious values. This seems to be the heritage of Joan's Sicilian-born grandmother, who "was brutally realistic about all religious matters. She knew the stories from Ottati; she knew who drowned their newborn babies in the bottom of the well, then went to Confession and received the Sacraments." Nevertheless, this grandmother was warmly human, and is by all odds the most vivid character in the book. Part of her legacy to Joan is an age-old skepticism of all "authorities": doctors, local grocers or priests. " 'Don't let the priest tell you what to do, tell him what you've done,' she used to say."

As Joan matures, she comes to identify fully with her grandmother's attitudes, and makes no distinctions between clericalism and the Catholic faith. For this reason, that part of the clerical audience for whom her book might be a constructive penance will scoffingly avoid it.

This is unfortunate, for though it is naive and tasteless, it is an honest reaction to decades of negative obsession with sex, and to persistent, though largely unconscious, denigration of women. The sad truth is that in the Longos' experience, their strivings for humanity seemed to place them in total opposition to the Church.

I Married a Priest may be a U.S. publishing "first" in its special subspecies of confessional literature; yet many American women have married priests in recent years. Most of those with whom I have had contact do not have the same feeling of separation from the faith that Joan Longo does, although it is interesting to note that their attitudes and experiences in other respects have been similar. Despite the title of her book, Joan insists, for instance, that she married Gabe, not a priest; I have yet to hear from one other wife who does not feel the same way. In answering my questionnaire to Catholic women some three years ago, two of these wives had said they would like to see a married clergy, but certainly would not like to be priests' wives. One girl recalled this laughingly, and said that of course it was the man, John, she married, and that the experience was not at all like the theory.

One wife, now the mother of two children, believes it "might be fruitful to uncover the great pitfalls and little rewards of the priest-woman relationship from the woman's standpoint before the decision to marry is made. Here are nerves rubbed raw at their worst." She continues, "I expected nothing and that's just what I got. I was, however, amazed at the chancery's ability to pretend I just wasn't there and at our bishop's inability to bring himself to refer to me by name, but only as *mulier*, (i.e. the Woman, alias Eve, bewitcher of priests etc.)"

Another wife of an ex-priest, a thoroughly mature and self-possessed woman, disclosed that this path to marriage dishes up an "unbelievable mixed salad of emotions" for the female. Like Joan Longo, she usually encounters a great many problems in being accepted by her husband's relatives. Even though they try to be friendly, the in-laws will often make the wife feel as if she has dashed all their hopes and self-esteem. The unhealthy secrecy imposed on the courtship and the often-difficult task of finding a job impose added burdens on the early years of such marriages. Evidence from about 30 of these wives suggests that the extra social and psychological burdens the marriages entail require both a mature decision and strength of character beyond the ordinary to ensure success.

Such strength sometimes comes in

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the process of examining values and relationships which the decision to marry involves. Several women I have heard from have grown personally and spiritually as a result of this experience, to a degree totally absent from Joan Longo's story. One couple, who had agonized over their decision separately, found that the ceremony of marriage itself, for which they had developed the liturgy, was a real turning point in their lives. The gingerbread, which some priests' brides miss, was delightfully absent. "It was like having a garbage collector come along and take away all the rubbish for free." In their own profession of love they found themselves freed from their earlier guilt and doubt.

This couple is moving further away from "the Catholic ghetto" and its ecclesiastical concerns. "Now we have little problems, but real ones. Like, how are we going to pay for the rug?" They do not feel, however, that the time spent in apostolic careers prior to their marriage was in any sense wasted. They are convinced their later life grew out of and added to the earlier one. They find their religious life to be greatly enriched.

Their only regret in looking back is the sadness they feel "in the inability of the 'system' of the Holy Roman Catholic Church to enlarge and contain within itself the ability to respond to a great human need in the Church, as Pope John did."

Other couples speak of "continuing the work of the modern priesthood in our daily lives." As to whether or not she would like her husband to be able to exercise his priestly function with the blessing of the Church, one woman responded: "This is a complicated question . . . I guess we start and end with the concept of the priesthood. It seems to me that we will not live long enough for the official church to give priests enough flexibility for the relevance and experimentation needed for a modern priesthood." She goes on, however, to express her hope "to share in his priesthood as his wife."

Such remarks indicate that a number of priests' wives, like their husbands, realize that the celibacy obligation is not, in itself, either the main reason their husbands and others are leaving the priesthood, nor would its relaxation alone be an answer to the crisis in vocations the Church now faces. Acceptance of a married clergy in some form would be, nevertheless, an essential part of the necessary changes. Most of the women I have heard from do believe in the inevitability of such approval, even though their estimate of the timing of such a step once again recalls *The Midnight Court,* this time the opinion handed down by the Queen at the end:

Beware the while the powers that be,
They'll have to marry yet, you'll see,
Tho' long deferred the day will come
With licence from the Pope at Rome;
They'll sit in council on your case
And straight release the priestly race
In east and west and south and north
To woo and wed and wax thenceforth.

SALLY CUNNEEN, *associate editor of* Cross Currents, *is the author of the recently published book* Sex: Female, Religion: Catholic *(Holt, Rinehart).*

BOOKS

The artist and Marxist aesthetics

Art and Revolution
JOHN BERGER
Pantheon, $5.95

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Art and Revolution is a fascinating, contradictory, irritating book. I would recommend it to any reader interested in the relationship between aesthetics and politics even though I disagree with its central thesis.

In theory, John Berger's volume is a study of the work of the Soviet sculptor, Ernst Neizvestny. But, as Berger himself realizes, even copious illustrations cannot substitute for the visual and tactile experience of three-dimensional art. So this book really becomes an essay on the interrelationship of society and the individual genius. Or more precisely, it takes the case of Neizvestny, who had a famous confrontation with Nikita Khrushchev, as an illustration of the powers and problems of the artist in this incredible century.

At the outset, Berger's Marxist attack on the Stalinist theory of "socialist realism" is quite perceptive—which makes it all the more puzzling that he ends up embracing a more sophisticated, if confused, version of that thesis. When Peter the Great set out to modernize his country in the eighteenth century, there was no indigenous tradition in painting except iconography. So it became Tsarist policy to impose aesthetics upon the nation by decree and through an academy; style became policy. As a result, "All the Russian artists of the nineteenth century knew *how* they were going to paint before they knew *what* they were going to paint."

For a brief period between October, 1917 and the Stalinization of Soviet life in the Twenties, the old academic rules were overturned. There was the vast outpouring one associates with Malevich, Kandinsky, Gabo, with Mayakovsky and Futurism and all the avant garde trends. But then, in the name of "socialist realism," Stalin instituted the old Tsarist policy. In theory, this moralizing of the arts was supposed to appeal to and indoctrinate the masses: there is an incredible

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moment in one of Shokolov's later volumes when a character makes a gripping personal choice on the basis of hearing a speech by Stalin. But, as Berger shrewdly observes, the people didn't like the party-line works because "either their ideological optimism was too brutally contradicted by everyday experience, or if they were 'pure' landscapes they were compared unfavorably with their nineteenth-century prototypes."

In his analysis of this Stalinist aesthetic, Berger makes quite good use of a distinction made by Georg Lukacs, but in so doing prepares the way for his own acceptance of a variant of the "socialist realism" approach. Lukacs, building on some perceptive remarks by Marx, distinguished between realism and naturalism. The latter, exemplified by Zola, sought to present reality "as it is"; it pretended stylelessness but really described its subject from the special vantage point of its sordidness and brutality. But realism, with Balzac its triumphant exemplar, understood that the artist must have a point of view and took as its particular perspective the typical. That is not to say that the realistic novelist presented the average man of a given epoch but that in the highly individuated features of the hero one glimpsed the fundamental values and choices of his time.

In one ingenious use of Lukacs' theory, Konrad Farner saw it as both Marxist and Thomist. He held that Picasso's art was banned in Russia while Picasso himself was welcome (this was in 1955), and vice versa in the United States, because his creations did faithfully represent the capitalist decadence in which he lived. Thus, even granting his greatness within the corrupt West, his paintings could not be allowed to intrude upon the purified Communism of Russia.

Berger does not, of course, descend to such scholastic exegesis of holy writ. Rather he understands that, in Stalinist aesthetics, "realism is naturalism which succeeds. And the secret of success lies, once again, in the choice of subject matter." Only, where the French naturalists fixed upon the ugliness of "reality" as it is, the Russians depicted the glories of their "reality" as the government defined it for them. In each case, form was considered nothing, subject everything. And as in the Tsarist academy so in its Stalinist successor, "the treatment has been thought out, decided upon and finished before the painting begins. It is a question of applying the right dogma to the subject."

After this sophisticated, historical and analytic rejection of socialist realism, Berger attempts a Marxist evaluation of Neizvestny. As I noted before, the reader simply cannot tell whether his judgments are right or wrong on the basis of photos. But, perhaps more basically, (and Berger himself alludes to the problem), the Marxian categories apply best to the novel, the favored art form of that capitalist revolution which also gave rise to Marxism. There are very few worthwhile Marxist studies of painting and sculpture—Arnold Hauser's *Mannerism* is a notable exception—and given the inaccessibility of Neizvestny's art, one does not really know if Berger has deepened his methodology. Given his political criteria of ultimate aesthetic judgment, I suspect he has not.

But the anecdotal material in *Art and Revolution* is fascinating: the sculptor must buy his materials on the black market because state institutions monopolize artists' supplies; in his exchange with Khrushchev, Neizvestny replies to a threat by saying, "You are talking to a man who is perfectly capable of killing himself at any moment"; and so on. And at times Berger does achieve a sort of Pateresque translation of visual experiences into words. There is, for example, a delicate discussion of metaphor and symbol, suggested by the evocation of love by the movement of wind over wheat.

And yet, for all of this awareness, Berger's final claim for Neizvestny's greatness is socialist realist in character: that his sculpture expresses the courage and endurance of the anti-imperialist and social emancipation struggle.

I suspect that this Stalinist methodology in an anti-Stalinist work derives from Lukacs. To Lukacs—and one does not know if the theory was but another ploy to save his life—Balzac and Stendhal could be brutally frank about bourgeois reality because they wrote before it was threatened by socialism. But once the menace of revolution appeared, the bourgeois artist could not longer be truthful about his society, for that would give aid and comfort to the enemy on the Left. Therefore the geniuses opted out of social reality and plunged into hallucination and dream and broke-up traditional forms while the time-servers produced saccharine apologies. In short, great art once developed out of a false and even reactionary social consciousness—Marx regarded Greek tragedy which emerged from a slave economy as an achievement never again equaled —but in the modern period, only the "progressive" can create meaningfully.

The problem with this Lukacs thesis is that it is wrong. The lines on usury in Ezra Pound's Canto LI were almost certainly intended in an anti-Semitic spirit and were probably related to the author's crackpot theories on money; and they are also great. Or William Faulkner, who would have fought for the Confederacy in a new Civil War, is a thousand times greater than any socialist realist I have ever read. In other words, art still escapes the political criteria today even as Marx realized it did in ancient Greece and revolutionary France.

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REVIEWERS

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If Berger is simply saying that all art expresses truth and that the human truth today is anti-imperialist and socialist, that is an acceptable, banal tautology which does not help the critic or the public. If he is arguing that Neizvestny's greatness is propagandistic —which I hardly think is his point— then he has returned to Stalinist aesthetics.

It is unfortunate that this book is marred by such a fundamental theoretical confusion. But even so, I found it stimulating, exciting, and worthwhile.

A Church Without Priests?

JACQUES DUQUESNE

Macmillan, $4.95

RICHARD P. McBRIEN

The title of this book raises a mathematical rather than a theological question. Jacques Duquesne, a French journalist, suggests that the Church, by perpetuating the clerical style of life, is running the risk of losing most of its priests and of attracting even fewer candidates to take their places. He does not argue, as some have done, that the Church can get on very well with a charismatic ministry over against one linked with ordination.

More than three-quarters of this book follows a kind of case-study method, at least in a broad sense. The descriptions of the various problems confronted by priests today (and almost all of the cases reflect the situation in France) are based on interviews, sometimes even second-hand. The style, in other words, is journalistic rather than scientific.

His principal finding in this first part of the book is that priests do not leave the ministry in order to marry, but that they marry because they have left the priesthood. While he offers only fragmentary evidence for this assertion, it is doubtful that many sociologists or psychologists would argue with him. Celibacy is an aspect of the more radical problem of the dysfunctional forms of the ministry as such.

Duquesne's theological convictions are clear. "Priests are necessary to a Church," he writes in the opening sentence of Part Two. What he seeks to undermine is not the priesthood but clericalism.

The clerical society must be destroyed for three reasons. First, it is oppressive for many of the priests who must continue to live within it. Secondly, it is keeping many potential priests away from the ministry. And, thirdly, it is harming the missionary activity of the Church by isolating some of the Church's key personnel from the arena where the real issues of the Gospel are being worked out.

How is clericalism to be brought down? The first proposal is predictable enough: obligatory celibacy must be abolished. He takes direct aim at the recent encyclical and has little difficulty hitting what can only be described as a very slow-moving target. Curiously, he argues that in some places those who have already been ordained will have to remain celibates for the sake of the people, although it would have to be

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made clear that the next generation of priests would indeed be free to marry. "Almost all priests would understand this and, presumably, accept it. Moreover, the idea of progress has conditioned us not to expect the benefits the next generation will enjoy." Both assumptions are questionable.

Secondly, clericalism can be dismantled if more and more priests move into secular occupations and if the priesthood itself is professionalized. This means a better selection of candidates, a greater sensitivity to the psychological motivation that brings some people into the priesthood, a longer period in the diaconate, seminary reform, the development of certain specializations, and adequate salaries.

There is nothing in this book that has not already been said before (and perhaps too many books are falling too often into this category). It simply adds another voice from outside the clerical circle advocating reforms whose urgency many inside that circle have come to recognize. On that account, the book could not even be described as mildly controversial. The title was perhaps designed to make it seem so, but it is not.

The issues are practically cut-and-dried by now. No serious theological argument can be brought forward on behalf of obligatory celibacy, and many can be brought against it. Neither can one argue—from Scripture, theology, history, or doctrine—that the full-time professional ministry is the only viable form of the priesthood. Secular occupations and ministerial service are not necessarily at cross-purposes, and few people have made this case so effectively as Joseph Fichter, S.J., who also provides the Introduction to Duquesne's book. Unfortunately, Duquesne does not challenge the traditional exclusion of women from the ordained ministry, even though most of the theological reasons that have been advanced against such ordinations are now recognized as specious in the extreme.

If you have not read any of the recent literature on the reform of clerical life, you might be interested in investing some few hours in this one. But if you have already sampled some of this material, you should be satisfied to follow Duquesne's own parting advice: ". . . the desirability of abolishing the clerical society for the great good of all . . . does not seem to be any longer a subof discussion. It is time for action."

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Challenge of the Land

CHARLES E. LITTLE

Open Space Action Institute, $3.75

CONSTANCE L. STALLINGS

Pity the soft-cover book: nobody reviews it. It makes *Books In Print* but very little else. To most intents and purposes, the hard work of the author is wasted, for who is going to buy it if he doesn't know it exists? Such is the unhappy limbo of *Challenge of the Land* by Charles E. Little. For further insult, to find a copy at all, you have to get it from The Open Space Action Institute at 145 E. 52nd St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Challenge of the Land is one conservationist's persuasive attempt to go beyond the "there's no room left—ain't it awful" school of passive complainers. It provides steps that can be taken by those who wrote their Hickel letters, civic leaders, and any municipal who can be convinced of the physical, social, and economic benefits of open spaces, now and in the future.

Other books have discussed zoning *or* recreation/parks *or* federal assistance programs *or* owner responsibilities *or* pollution. All these aspects of land preservation are presented here in a cohesive, organized whole illuminated by detailed case histories of successful community efforts. The book is more than a mere compilation of facts. It is skillfully, almost delightfully, written, even to quoting pertinent dialogue in the course of land acquisition. For instance, there's " 'Actually, all the old bastard wants is to get out of his taxes.' " (The old bastard heard about that remark, and that was the end of the deal.)

As reinforcement for the importance of open space, the author brings together the beliefs of such sources as biologist John Bardach, economist Marion Clawson, landscape architect Ian McHarg, naturalist Richard Pough, and the Federal Government. The beautiful thing is that they mesh so agreeably.

Little knows that nobody loves a "slurb"; new housing needn't be monotonous. He believes in conservation for its own sake, but also for the sake of the public: he shows that it's less expensive to use land wisely in the first place than to control floods and lessen pollution after the damage is done, so let's have less tampering with natural resources. And he recalls the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission's 1962 report, product of four years' work, which stated that by the year 2000 the population of America will have doubled, and what with more money and leisure, the recreation need will have tripled. Can you picture your favorite corner of park with three times as many people in it?

Of course the crux of the matter is *how* to acquire the open space. Little

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says, "Municipal leaders should be disabused of any notion that the preservation of the natural environment in the metropolitan countryside will be achieved, finally, by a bureaucrat dashing in at the last moment on a white horse to pluck the urban fat from the suburban fire by showering town hall with thousand-dollar bills." Not that he turns his nose up at Federal aid for land acquisition. He think it's worth a try and gives a neat run-down of a multiplicity of money-giving programs in the Departments of Interior, HUD, Agriculture, and even Commerce. He advises where to go with what kind of land request, and if that doesn't work, where to try next.

But direct acquisition of land isn't the only way. Conservation easements can be used—the means whereby governments purchase the right to keep land open (or that right is donated) rather than owning the land itself. The easement can have manifold applications, as wide as the variety of land forms. Land trusts are another technique. The desired land becomes owned (through endowment or sale) by a local trust group, or a national trust group like the Natural Conservancy. Thereafter it serves the public as a park, and the local government is usually only too glad to be spared upkeep and development costs. Then, there's environmental zoning: builders are barred from construction on flood plains of rivers, or steep slopes. (What went wrong in Los Angeles?) Municipal ordinances can be changed to permit cluster developments rather than require the one-house-one-plot plan which has plagued most of the U.S.

The legalities of government could be a major obstacle to some faint-hearts, and it is in this respect that Little's book shines: it has a fat appendix of the effecting ordinances, acts, and easements that have worked. Here, for precedents, are the Ramapo Development Easement Acquisition Law, the Hillsborough, N.J., Clustering Ordinance, and the Aspetuck Land Trust Certificate of Incorporation. Most of this sample legislation applies to the Northeast, but there's no reason why it couldn't be adapted with variations to other sections of the country.

Challenge of the Land is a fantastic combination of the wildly idealistic with the intensely practical. It could make a lot of difference to the face of America—if people only knew about it.

The Black Messiah

ALBERT B. CLEAGE, JR.

Sheed & Ward, $6.50

LAWRENCE E. LUCAS

Albert B. Cleage, Jr. is a minister of the United Church of Christ and pastor of the Shrine of the Black Madonna in Detroit, Michigan. I could employ a lot of adjectives here—"controversial," "militant," "radical," the whole bit—but these words have become meaningless through misuse and overuse. What is important is that Albert B. Cleage, Jr., has written a timely, relevant and hopefully effective book entitled *The Black Messiah*.

The dust jacket tells us that, *"The Black Messiah* is perhaps the most significant book yet to appear on the subject of Black Power. Other works have dealt with the historical and sociological roots of Black Power; *The Black Messiah* gives the theology of the movement which may change the course of American History."

It is an exaggeration to call *The Black Messiah* the most significant book yet to appear on Black Power, but this book is definitely one of the most significant. It is not a theology of Black Power in the sense of the more systematic approaches of Vincent Harding and Henry Mitchell. It is more a framework, an overall view into which more systematic treatments must be put and which will give them meaning.

What Cleage has provided is a clear, sharp and compelling rethinking of the entire Christian message in terms of the present realities of black life in America. In so doing he has corrected many of the distortions of the Christian message introduced and perpetuated by white "Christians" to further their be-

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THOMAS MERTON
MY ARGUMENT WITH THE GESTAPO

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lief in and behavior based on white supremacy. He has used the great themes of the Old and New Testaments to present a reality of Christ today which will be shocking to both whites and blacks. It will shock whites because they have believed in their distortions of the Christ-message and the Christ-experience. It will be shocking to blacks who have been brainwashed into accepting the white distortions. The major themes providing the framework are those of covenant and nation building, redemption of the nation and all peoples through that nation, and resurrection of the nation. Running through the entire work is the rediscovery of the historical Christ, a black Christ trying to build a black nation, made obscure by centuries of a whitening process; and never remaining in the past but always hurrying back to the present to find a resurrected and living Christ, a black Christ presently engaged in the building of a black nation. It is this Christ that he identifies, clarifies and interprets in the present experiences, aspirations and activities of black people.

There is much that is excellent in *The Black Messiah:* the themes of the loosing of fear, the need for the individual's willingness to sacrifice himself for the "nation," the entire chapter on Malcolm X entitled "Brother Malcolm." (In the final analysis I believe history will show that Malcolm X exerted a far greater influence on the minds of black people in America than even Martin Luther King, Jr.)

This reviewer has some misgivings, however. Cleage tends to overstate, and to be particularly unfair to St. Paul. "The Christianity which we see in the world today was not shaped by Jesus. It was put together by the Apostle Paul who never saw Jesus and given form and shape during the Middle Ages . . ." It is obvious that after being rejected by his own people, Paul made his great appeal to the Gentiles and was interested in making Christianity appealing and understanding to them in their conceptualization. However, to blame Paul for the use made of him to "justify" racism is excessive. Another example of overstatement: "The group concept is historic Christianity. Individualism is slave Christianity." Obviously the point about our great overemphasis of the latter to the exclusion of the former is well taken.

The Black Messiah sees the entire black revolution in America as essentially a religious, a Christian movement. Cleage masterfully describes that movement in terms of the Black Jesus, the difficulties and trials that must be overcome in the building of a black nation and the direction and hope of that Nation being built in Christ.

No black man can afford to pass it up. The "church-going," who unfortunately may be the ones to avoid it most, might begin to understand the meaning and pertinence of Christianity. While most churched blacks are pretty much in the same boat, I hopefully await a black member of the Catholic Church writing such a book. Right now, I suggest that all who can read, black and white, read it at least once. Those who can't read have it read to you.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 427)

members of the committee of scholars which, hopefully, will be established fairly soon to achieve the purposes he has outlined so clearly in his article. In fact, I think he ought to serve as the Catholic co-Chairman of this committee, and I hereby nominate him for this position.

(RT. REV. MSGR.) GEORGE G. HIGGINS
Director
Department of Social Development
United States Catholic Conference

New York

To the Editors: There are many points of deep interest in Father Pawlikowski's "Across a Deep Canyon." Especially significant, of course, is his desire that Jewish-Christian dialogue in the U.S.A. be not hindered by the Arab-Israeli confrontation in the Middle East.

"A new sharing of our religious traditions," however, and "truly incorporating the Jewish heritage into the mainstream of American life," will never be brought about by an insistence upon Christian "theological" acceptance of certain Jewish views regarding the State of Israel. When Christians look at the displacement of the Palestinian people by the Israeli people, the only theological criterion is that the deep human need represented by displaced Jews on the one hand and by displaced Christians and Muslims on the other. Only in the frank approach to human need in Palestine on both sides of the struggle is there hope of true dialogue between Christians and Jews in America.

HARRY G. DORWAN JR.
Executive Director
Middle East and Europe Dept.
National Council of
the Churches of Christ

Lexington, Ky.

To the Editors: Father John Pawlikowski's "Across the Canyon" [May 30] did a fine job of pointing out the new awareness of the problems of Jewish-Christian relations since the Arab-Is-

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raeli War of 1967. However, I believe he failed to get to the very heart of the matter when he urged a "radical change" in "theological rethinking of Christianity's relationship to Judaism," and that is the necessity for Christianity to overcome its inability to confront Judaism as the religion of Jesus and yet at the same time, a religion which denies the most fundamental tenet of Christianity.

Without Christ there is no Christianity, and the questioning of His primary relevance to the committed Christian is an emotionally jarring experience. If he comes up with a negative response to this questioning it can undermine the bridge of personal faith which unites him to Christ and to his religion. Furthermore, because of the built-in evangelicalism of Christianity, whether the Church can ever confront any non-Christian religion as a co-equal, is very much open to question.

I do not know whether I can be quite as optimistic as Father Pawlikowski.

(RABBI) WILLIAM J. LEFFLER

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Landmarks to the Poor

Latham, N.Y.

To the Editors: What a monument is the Albany cathedral to the faith of the people of France who built it for us, and that of the diocese for more than a century! What a beacon is this landmark to the poor who have inherited what they could never hope for. As the pendulum of passing time swings back many new throngs from the high rise apartments of the affluent and the non-affluent once more participate herein in worship. May this hallowed edifice in years to come embrace not only Catholic governors and mayors but groups such as are envisioned in the ecumenical binoculars of today where all men may join in brotherhood to praise the Father of us all. The inner city groups are already aware of what this God-centered influence means to them. Let us continue to preserve and enhance this effort by keeping this visible sign of God's presence intact until such time as the poor themselves can rebuild an equally fitting temple.

MARY C. COLLIS

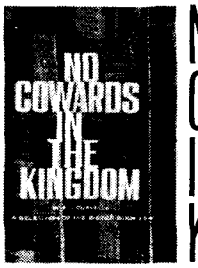
Albany

To the Editors: Mrs. Grumbach's article on the cathedral in urban America presents a challenge that must be met by the Catholic-Christian community in the cities of this country if we are to be any different from the local Chamber of Commerce or the various secular service clubs.

If her very positive suggestions appear impractical or naive to many, perhaps this is because we have really forgotten the message of Christ which is to be the difference in our fellows' lives, to show that there is an answer to the problem of human existence, and in this case to the very present problem of life in our cities.

How about some personal, coordinated cooperation from the more affluent parishes that surround the core city? Let's start *now* to give of our money and talents to the task of transforming the cathedral parish into a warm Christian center that will make a difference in the lives of people and cities.

ARTHUR R. KIRWIN, JR.



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by E. J. Cuskelly

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In What Sense Catholic?

Is COMMONWEAL a Catholic magazine? This is a question people often ask. If to be Catholic means to be an organ of the Church or of some official organization in the Church, the answer is obviously "no." The hierarchy has certainly given us no special mandate to speak. Nor can we claim to be the voice of the Catholic laity as a group—who can? If these things are what is meant by being Catholic, we would have to abdicate all claim. For all of its life, however, COMMONWEAL has been accepted as in some sense a Catholic publication, and with reason. The magazine is and has always been published by a small group of journalists who are themselves Catholic. They are men who are concerned with Catholicism, and with the meeting of spiritual and temporal. It is this characteristic that has primarily distinguished COMMONWEAL from other journals of opinion.

It is a fact, too, and not without significance, that most of our readers and many of our writers are also Catholics who have comparable interests. Such readers look to us for our views as Catholic laymen on the Church and the world, and such writers turn to us precisely because in our pages they can express these same concerns. Then too we have many non-Catholic readers and writers, and this also we would cite as part of being Catholic. Our non-Catholic readers look to us for a certain kind of Catholic thinking Our non-Catholic writers know they are welcome in our pages because we conceive of the Catholic spirit as one which welcomes good thinking and good writing, wherever found.

—COMMONWEAL, May 19, 1967

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